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Wednesday April 26, 2017

A "Paws" from Studying

Students who are feeling "ruff" during finals week can stop by the library for some puppy love and other stress-busting activities.

Finals week is a stressful time for college students, so the University is offering a variety of activities — and advice — to ease anxiety for students, ranging from pizza to puppies and meditation to massages.

Two dogs from the Miami Valley Pet Therapy Association will be among the library's finals week activities and amenities that include free food, coffee, soda, meditation and chair massages. Willow will be in the Roesch Library from 5-6 p.m. Monday, May 1, and Baxter will be there 5-6 p.m. Tuesday, May 2, for petting and playing.

Students can also take a restful walk in the garden among the flowers in the library's living indoor Mary Garden.

In addition to activities at the library, students also can burn off nervous energy at RecPlex, which will be open around the clock April 30-May 4 and offer free group fitness and yoga classes. Visit the campus recreation website for a full schedule and class descriptions.

Students up late shouldn't feel anxious about their safety walking home, either. Roesch Library and Kennedy Union will offer free cab rides for students to their residences midnight to 6 a.m. April 30 to May 3.

Therapy dogs and similar activities and amenities have made finals week appearances at college campuses across the nation. Harvard, Yale, Denison, Illinois State, and Massachusetts have similar finals week benefits.

They are fun ways to de-stress, according to Linda Rodgers, counselor for the University of Dayton counseling center who has taught

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workshops on test anxiety. She says one of the best ways for students to combat test anxiety is to create a coping structure to support their bodies as well as their minds.

"Develop a schedule and set a time to study," she said. "It's a good strategy to take mini-breaks and I'm always an advocate for exercise. Find a way to put that in as well."

Other tips from Rodgers:

- * Get enough rest the night before. Don't do all-nighters.
- * Know when to cut off the studying for rest, exercise or a relaxation break.
- * Take advantage of fun relaxation breaks many schools offer — chair massages, dance breaks, therapy dogs.
- * Make sure you eat breakfast.
- * And don't underestimate the smell and taste of success.

"Have a piece of peppermint candy in your mouth during the test," Rodgers said. "It's an interesting trick, but it works. Peppermint can slow you down a bit and relax you."

Visit the related link for more on University of Dayton finals week activities.

For more information, contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of news and communications, at 937-229-3391 or srobinson@udayton.edu.

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